

Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation in Caerphilly County Borough Council	
<u>LDP Policy Ref. NH 3.37</u>	SINC name: Coed Argoed, east of Bedwellty
Grid reference: SO178006	Area (hectares): 22
Survey date: 1st August 2007	Surveyed by: Dr Peter Sturgess (Hyder Consulting Ltd.)
(UDP policy reference: C11.27)	
Summary description	
<p>The main part of this SINC is belt of woodland following the River Sirhowy and its steep-sided valley. Much of the woodland has developed on former mining areas and spoil heaps, and several former railway lines are still present as footpaths. The woodland includes a mix of dominant species, including Sessile Oak, Beech, Downy Birch and Alder. Most of it has a dense understorey with abundant Bramble. There are several areas of grassland, including semi-improved neutral grassland in the floodplain, and semi-improved acid grassland in clearings on the valley side. Small areas of heath and acid grassland are also present on the east side of the valley. The valley sides above the trees are generally dominated by Bracken. The river itself is a separate SINC.</p>	
Qualifying features	
<p>Broad-leaved woodland with an assemblage of semi-natural indicators.</p> <p>River with natural channel features, good water quality and fish population.</p> <p>Semi-improved neutral grassland with at least 8 indicator species.</p> <p>Acid grassland and heath with at least 7 indicator species (at SO179006).</p>	
Secondary features	
<p>Bracken.</p> <p>Semi-improved acid grassland.</p>	
Potential value/ unconfirmed features	
<p>Likely to provide good foraging and roosting opportunities for bats.</p> <p>The woodland has potential habitat for Dormouse.</p> <p>The woodland margins and Bracken and heath areas are likely to provide habitat for reptiles.</p>	
Current management (including problems and opportunities for biodiversity enhancement)	
<p>The woodland generally appears unmanaged. Horses have grazed some of the grassland areas, though none were grazed at the time of the survey. Restoring grazing and Bracken control would generally be beneficial for biodiversity by maintaining grassland communities and clearings within the woodland (several clearings appear to have become dominated by Bracken since earlier surveys). Selective clearance of scrub or coppicing of trees could also be considered to help diversify the woodland structure in the absence any other woodland management. Sheep graze the heath and acid grassland at SO179006. Japanese Knotweed occurs alongside the river (adjacent SINC NH 3.11 River Sirhowy).</p>	
Additional information	
<p>Much of the woodland is of relatively recent origin and with a low frequency of semi-natural indicators. Even so, the scale of the woodland and occurrence of so many mature trees and small-scale variation in habitats is of value for biodiversity. The linear nature of the habitat is also likely to be of value to species such as bats and Otters that would be expected to follow the river (SINC NH</p>	

3.11). Similar broadleaved woodland communities exist on the west side of the valley, adjacent to the former railway line continuous with SINC NH 3.32 Markham Railway Line. The wooded stream corridor to the east could also be included within the SINC as a habitat connection to SINC NH 3.34 Hafodrisclawdd. These areas should be considered for inclusion at future SINC review.

Access/ community use

Several public footpaths cross the site and informal paths are also present.

Species list (Dominant species, SINC Criteria, RDB or other notable indicator species)

(LBAP species shown in **bold**, species confirmed by 2007 survey in *italics*)

Woodland canopy and shrub species: *Quercus petraea*, *Fagus sylvatica*, *Corylus avellana*, *Betula pubescens*, *Ilex aquifolium*, *Alnus glutinosa*, *Salix caprea*, *Salix cinerea*, *Rubus fruticosus*, *Hedera helix*, *Fraxinus excelsior*, *Sorbus aucuparia*, *Crataegus monogyna*, *Malus sp.*, *Acer pseudoplatanus*, *Lonicera periclymenum*, *Ulex gallii*, *Ulex europaeus*, *Rosa arvensis*, *Calluna vulgaris*, *Vaccinium myrtillus*, *Salix aurita*, *Sambucus nigra*, *Frangula alnus*, *Rubus idaeus*, *Rosa canina*.

Woodland ground flora species: *Geum urbanum*, *Circaea lutetiana*, *Lysimachia nemorum*, *Oxalis acetosella*, *Lamium galeobdolon*, *Viola riviniana*, *Stellaria holostea*, **Hyacinthoides non-scripta**, *Digitalis purpurea*, *Viola palustris*, *Veronica montana*, *Viola riviniana*, *Solidago virgaurea*, *Hypericum pulchrum*, *Ajuga reptans*, *Chrysosplenium oppositifolium*, *Urtica dioica*, *Fallopia japonica*, *Agrostis capillaris*, *Holcus mollis*, *Deschampsia flexuosa*, *Anthoxanthum odoratum*, *Brachypodium sylvaticum*, *Carex remota*, *Carex sylvatica*, *Pteridium aquilinum*, *Blechnum spicant*, *Dryopteris filix-mas*, *Dryopteris dilatata*, *Dryopteris affinis*, *Polystichum setiferum*, *Polystichum aculeatum*, *Atrichum undulatum*, *Pseudotaxiphyllum elegans*, *Mnium hornum*, *Polytrichum formosum*, *Kindbergia praelonga*, *Eurhynchium striatum*, *Dicranum scoparium*, *Hypnum jutlandicum*.

Heath and acid grassland species (SO179006): *Vaccinium myrtillus*, *Calluna vulgaris*, *Potentilla erecta*, *Galium saxatile*, *Agrostis capillaris*, *Festuca ovina*, *Nardus stricta*, *Deschampsia flexuosa*, *Danthonia decumbens*, *Anthoxanthum odoratum*, *Luzula campestris*, *Holcus lanatus*, *Pteridium aquilinum*, *Rhytidadelphus squarrosus*, *Scleropodium purum*, *Dicranum scoparium*, *Polytrichum formosum*, *Polytrichum piliferum*.

Semi-improved neutral grassland species in floodplain: *Galium palustre*, *Lotus corniculatus*, *Crepis capillaris*, *Epilobium hirsutum*, *Ranunculus repens*, *Typha latifolia*, *Solanum dulcamara*, *Agrimonia procera*, *Stellaria graminea*, *Prunella vulgaris*, *Angelica sylvestris*, *Plantago lanceolata*, *Veronica beccabunga*, *Oenanthe crocata*, *Cirsium palustre*, *Ranunculus flammula*, *Lolium perenne*, *Cynosurus cristatus*, *Glyceria fluitans*, *Deschampsia cespitosa*, *Agrostis stolonifera*, *Holcus lanatus*, *Anthoxanthum odoratum*, *Juncus effusus*, *Juncus tenuis*.

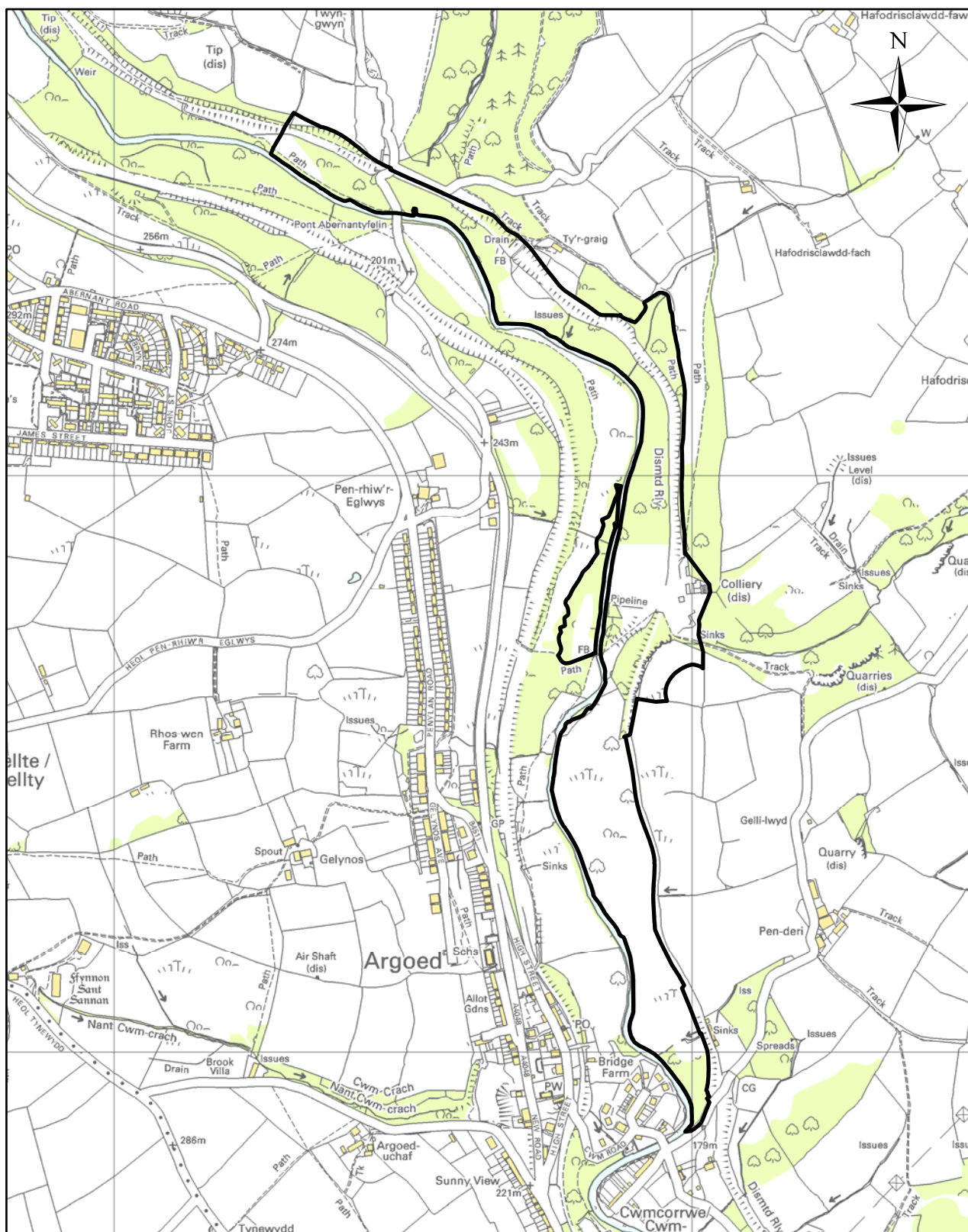
Semi-improved neutral /acid grassland species in (formerly grazed) woodland clearings: *Potentilla erecta*, *Trifolium pratense*, *Ranunculus acris*, *Lotus corniculatus*, *Cirsium palustre*, *Hypochaeris radicata*, *Pilosella officinarum*, *Rumex acetosa*, *Centaurea nigra*, *Euphrasia sp.*, *Leontodon hispidus*, *Ranunculus flammula*, *Succisa pratensis*, *Pedicularis sylvatica*, *Stellaria graminea*, *Galium palustre*, *campanula rotundifolia*, *Holcus lanatus*, *Agrostis capillaris*, *Lolium perenne*, *Cynosurus cristatus*, *Danthonia decumbens*, *Agrostis stolonifera*, *Molinia caerulea*, *Anthoxanthum odoratum*, *Luzula campestris*, *Carex viridula*, *Carex panicea*, *Juncus articulatus*, *Pteridium aquilinum*, *Rhytidadelphus squarrosus*

Fauna observations: **Buzzard**, **Green Woodpecker**, **Kingfisher**, **Blackcap**, **Jay**, **Blue Tit**, **Gatekeeper Butterfly**, **Green-veined White Butterfly**, **Broad-bodied Chaser Dragonfly**, **Golden-ringed Dragonfly**.

Additional records from desk study: **Bullfinch**, **Pied Flycatcher**, **Silver-washed Fritillary Butterfly**, *Quercus robur* and hybrids, *Wahlenbergia hederacea*, *Polytrichum commune*, *Sphagnum sp.*

Caerphilly County Borough Council
Site of Importance for Nature Conservation
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Coed Argoed, East of Bedwellty 22 Ha

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Gall hyn arwain at erlyniad neu achos sifil. Cyngor Bwrdeistref Sirol Caerffili, 100025372, 2008.